Government has been culpably negligent in this respect. Nothing worth the name has been attempted or done in this matter for years past. More than 75 per cent of the people are depending on agriculture and agriculture alone. Unless that is put on a sure and sound basis, Government cannot congratulate itself on its achievements in this line. This is a Department, which has to be organised, and worked exclusively. There is no justification for clubbing it with Panchayats. The policy seems to be bad, and the sooner it is rectified, the better.

Panchayats.

In any scheme of rural reconstruction, which any Government undertakes, the Village Panchayat plays a very important part. It is here that self-government begins, and people are taught to manage their own affairs. The Regulation, by which Panchayats are constituted in our State, is framed in a very liberal spirit. These units of self-government are given very important functions. Minor irrigation, communications, medical relief, etc., and in some cases judicial functions, are assigned to the Panchayats. But the present method of the working of the Panchayat Department is far from satisfactory. There is no proper and effective supervision exercised over the working of these bodies. The Superintendent of Agriculture cannot find time to satisfactorily and effectively supervise these bodies. A special officer is absolutely necessary for this purpose. The funds now placed at the disposal of these bodies are insufficient for the carrying out of their duty properly. Even the small amounts sanctioned for each Panchayat are not placed at its disposal in time, so that they may utilise them in the best manner possible. The result is deplorable. Sanctioned amounts are allowed to lapse in many cases, and thus the conveniences of these villages are sacrificed. I know, Sir, of instances, where maintenance of Panchayat roads has not been taken up even by the end of Mithunam, for the simple reason that the sanctioned amounts are not made available to those bodies. Particular attention has to be paid to these bodies, as they, if properly worked, would go a great way in the establishment of popular government in the country.

Excise.

Sir, I come next to the *Excise Policy* of the Government.

The policy that is adopted by the Government in the working of the Department has to be modified to a very great extent. Temperance and prohibition should be the ultimate goal of the Government in their excise policy. I am not unaware of the fact, Sir, that our Darbar cannot work out an independent policy of its own, as our State is surrounded by Travancore and

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British territories. We can, no doubt, have only a common policy with them. But it cannot be gainsaid that the moral and material welfare of the people cannot be brought about, unless the evil habits, of taking to alcohol and other intoxicants, are completely irradicated. The ever-increasing revenue, that the Government is deriving from this Department, shows, however, that they are paying but little attention to their duties in this respect. Prohibition can be brought about gradually by trying to reduce the number of shops, and by reducing the quantity available for consumption and also by locating shops in distant places. At present, toddy and arrack shops are more common than way-side coffee shops. The cry of the Municipalities to remove these shops from their midst is a cry in the wilderness. It is high time for the Government to take a bold step in this direction.

Law and Justice.

The next subject, Sir, on which I should like to say a few words, is *Administration of Law and Justice.*

Sir, the accommodation provided for our District Judges and Munsiffs, especially at Ernakulam, is simply miserable. In the present District Court building, there is no room at all for holding an Additional Judge's Court. There is no proper place to accommodate the Sirkar Vakil and his office. His office is now preventing the ingress of breeze from the west to the District Court hall. The Additional District Judge's court is nothing better than a dungeon. It is a pity that the Government is so careless In the matter of providing suitable accommodation. As regards the Munsiff's Courts, the case is worse. Two courts are packed in one and the same building. A very small building, which is most unsuited for the purpose for which it is used, is used at present. The two Munsiffs at Ernakulam have to share a common private chamber. There is no room in that building for vakils. This Department is producing a lot of revenue to the Government. That the Government should not accommodate the judicial officers and their staff properly is certainly unjustifiable.

As regards appointments to the services in this Department, any one should emphatically protest against the policy that is being followed by the Government in this respect. You know, Sir, that, as a rule, both in British India and in the Sister State of Travancore, competent members of the Bar are directly recruited to all grades of appointments in the judicial service. Here the policy is just the reverse. Direct recruitment from the Bar is a rare exception. I do not say that competent men in service should not get promotions. All that I wish to bring home to the Government is that the Government should con

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